

EYE HEALTHCARE

CATARACTS

The most common eye complication seen by the Optometrist is the cataract. A cataract is a clouding of the eye's internal natural lens, situated just behind the Iris and pupil (approx 10mm in diameter). The lens material is made up mostly of proteins and water. The proteins are arranged in a precise pattern which make the lens very clear and transparent, but as we age, they can 'clump' together forming small dark areas known as cataract.

The risk of cataract increases with age, but other risk factors include Diabetes (cortical, "spoke-like" cataract), excessive drinking and smoking, prolonged exposure to ultraviolet light or as a side effect of medication e.g. steroids (posterior pole cataract). Cataracts can also occur from 'Trauma' to the eye e.g. Injury or can indeed can be there from birth (congenital cataract).

The most common symptoms of early cataract include cloudy or blurry vision, where there is a loss of contrast in the distance and objects seem

"washed out" of their colour. Poor night vision coupled with excessive car headlight glare is also commonly reported.

When ones 'quality of life' becomes affected by poor vision, the next stage is surgery. Here a small probe emitting ultrasound waves is inserted into the eye, removing the old lens by suction and replacing it with a new counterpart called an intraocular lens. This completes the process in a very prompt (approx 15 minutes) way delivering a greater than 95% success rate.

Noel McCrystal
BSc.(Hons.)MCOptom.Dip.Sc.V MASv.P

Scotch Street Centre
T: 028 87722379
www.mccrystalopticians.com